



The
National Intelligence
Daily

Published by the Director of Central Intelligence for Named Principals Only

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Copy No.

WEDNESDAY 29 MARCH 1978

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 073

TCS 573/78

NR Record

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WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Brazil: Prospects for Relations with US

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Brazilian President Geisel, who will meet with President Carter today in Brasilia, will leave office within a year, although he will continue to make policy while paving the way for a hand-picked successor. Geisel anticipates continuing problems in relations with the US, largely because of US positions on human rights and nuclear non-proliferation.

Geisel and most Brazilian military leaders resent the US positions on these questions as intrusions into the nation's domestic affairs. Geisel is particularly offended because he believes the US has not acknowledged progress he has made on human rights, including the holding of two relatively open elections and relaxing



President-designate
General Figueiredo

press censorship. Geisel is a nationalist and a proud man. If worsened relations are the price of pursuing what he perceives as Brazil's interests, he is willing to pay it, even if with regret.

Brazilians hold as an article of faith that Brazil is destined to become a world power and that this means being able to pursue a foreign policy independent of foreign influence. At times, they have tried conspicuously to demonstrate their independence of the US.

Economic growth and industrialization in recent years have swelled the national ego and convinced many that "greatness" is nearly at hand. They have come to see Brazil as a competitor with the US for resources and markets. As Brazil becomes more competitive, the potential for further differences will grow.

Brazil's leaders are aware that economic development could be derailed, especially by recession in countries that consume Brazil's exports and by fluctuating commodities prices. They therefore view US trade restrictions, such as countervailing duties, as threatening Brazil's export-led growth.

Geisel and most military leaders also believe that the US, willfully or not, contributes to social unrest in Brazil by encouraging domestic dissent.

In recent weeks, there have been reports that Brazil's leaders believe the US is actively engaged in trying to undermine the regime.

Some of these reports were undoubtedly intended to heighten concern in the US over US-Brazilian relations and to discourage President Carter's plans to meet with Cardinal Arns and other opponents of the regime.

Some Brazilian officers reportedly are heartened by President Carter's expressed desire to meet with President-designate General Figueiredo. They believe that there is little that can be done to alter Geisel's view of the US, but think that Figueiredo has an open mind and will welcome the opportunity to establish an early relationship with the US President.

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CG NID 78-073JX

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SS—Secret SPOKE
S—Secret
C—Confidential
U—Unclassified
NOFORN—Not Releasable to Foreign Nationals
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